Nigam Limited (BSNL) in Uttaranchal circle, 388 are working on Optical Fibre. It is planned to connect 37 exchanges during 2006-07 and 15 during 2007-08 on optical fibre cable media. Balance 13 exchanges are planned to be upgraded to Intermediate Data Rate (IDR) digital satellite media.

(b) and (c) All exchanges are connected on reliable media such as optical fibre, Ultra High Frequency (UHF) and satellite. These media have been provided as per capacity requirement and topography of the area and are capable of providing voice service. Regular upgradation of media is done to meet traffic requirements.

IT hub in Vijayawada and Orissa

3502. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Andhra Pradesh Government propose to develop another IT hub in Vijayawada;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action plan of the Central Government to set up such IT hub in the cash strapped Orissa State to help the State to improve its economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government of Andhra Pradesh (AP) has identified 30.60 acres of land near Vijayawada for construction of IT Towers, IT Special Economic Zones etc., on Public-Private Partnership model.

(c) Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) an autonomous society under the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India set up two centres in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, in Orissa for providing high speed data communication facilities, statutory support on STP Scheme and incubation facilities for the software exporters in the State.

STPI has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the the Government of Orissa in the year 2005 to set up another centre in Berhampur.

As per the Government of Orissa, the above three cities *viz.* Bhubaneswar, Rourkela and Berhampur have been identified as major IT hubs of the State.

VSNL's partnership with South Africa

†3503. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd., a Central Government Undertaking is planning to start its operations by entering into a partnership in land line communication project in South Africa; and

(b) if so, the details of the countries with which Corporation has entered into agreements during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. has reported that it has signed a Shareholders Agreement to have 51 % stake in second fixed line operator of South Africa and has not entered into any other such agreement during the last three years. However, Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. is no more a Central Government Undertaking since 13th February, 2002.

Revolution in Telecom Industry

3504. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to bear the cost of Rs. 1,000 crores for providing more spectrum to the Telecommunication industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.